THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) The Indus Waters Treaty, 1960 between India and Pakistan was signed on 19th September, 1960.

(b) As provided in the Treaty, India and Pakistan each have created a permanent post of Commissioner for Indus Waters. The two Commissioners together from the Permanent Indus Commission, which has established and maintained cooperative arrangements for implementation of this Treaty.

(c) The Treaty has been in satisfactory operation for the past 37 years and by and large serves the interest of both the countries.

Distortion of History

1830. SHRI P. SHANMUGAM : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned 'Government ignoring sikhs role in freedom movement' appearing in the "Hindustan Times" dated June 28, 1997; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to give them a honoured place in the 50th year celebration of India's Independence?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To commemorate 50th Anniversary of India's Independence, programmes/celebrations are being planned at all villages, Tahsils, Districts Headquarters, State capitals, National and International level which will include honouring of all freedom fighters, as well as villagers who contributed to the political, social and economic lift of the village. Each State, including Punjab, has set up a State Level Committee to decide the programmes and events for the year-long commemoration. Freedom Fighters of all communities including Sikhs will be honoured. The decision to honour freedom fighters hailing from a particular State, and recognise their contributions would lie with the State Level Committees.

Child Welfare Centre

1831. DR. A.K. PATEL : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the number of child welfare centres opened in the backward and tribal areas of Gujarat during the Eighth Plan period;

(b) whether any foreign assistance is being provided to the State for these centres; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) There is no central or centrally sponsored scheme under which Child Welfare Centres could be opened. However, for welfare and development of children, 103 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) projects, 22 Creches and 24 Anganwadi-cum-Creches were sanctioned during the 8th Plan period to provide vital services to vulnerable children in backward and tribal areas of Gujarat.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides assistance in the form of equipment and other supplies including vehicles, typewriters, weighing scales, duplicators etc. for the ICDS projects.

[Translation]

Responsibility of Army for Amarnath Pilgrimage

1832. SHRI SHYAM LAL BANSHIWAL :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the army has taken a decision to take the responsibility of the pilgrims in view of the tragic accident taken place during Amarnath Pilgrimage last year;

(b) if so, whether the Government have made special arrangements for the safety of the pilgrims in view of the said accident; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c) The responsibility of conducting Amarnath Yatra rests with the State Government. Army is also extending all help to the State Government as required by them in the smooth conduct of the Yatra. This year Army has provided 500 double ply tents and 40,000 blankets. In addition, Army's medical facilities and other assistance are also being provided.

Waiving of Interest in Relation to Rajasthan Canal

1833. SHRI NIHAL CHAND CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government had constructed 'Pacce Khale' on Rajasthan Canal;

(b) whether the Government have issued any instructions to the farmers to deposit the instalments after the completion of construction;

(c) whether the principal amount will be borne by the State Government;

(d) whether the Union Government have any proposal to waive the interest;